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**CHICAGO, LOS ANGELES, NEW YORK & SAN FRANCISCO FILE AMICUS BRIEF IN *FLORES V. SESSIONS*; SEEK TO PROTECT CHILDREN SEPARATED FROM THEIR FAMILIES BY TRUMP ADMINISTRATION**

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, along with Angeles City Attorney Mike Feuer, along with Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, New York Mayor Bill de Blasio, and San Francisco City Attorney Dennis Herrera, today announced that Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco joined together to file an amicus brief in *Flores v. Sessions*, pending before Judge Dolly M. Gee of the United States District Court for the Central District of California, opposing President Donald Trump's efforts to 1) engage in long term detention of migrant children and 2) eliminate all critical child welfare oversight currently being provided by state licensing agencies.

The brief supports the class of *Flores* plaintiffs, all of whom are migrant children, as they seek to defend against the Trump administration's cruel and inhumane family separate policies at the southwest border.

"After public outrage forced President Trump to end his cruel policy of tearing children from the arms of their parents, the Trump Administration is now pursuing another disturbing policy change. Indefinitely detaining refugee families in non-licensed facilities is an unnecessary action that will also very likely cause significant harm to children and families, which is why I am proud to join Los Angeles, New York City and San Francisco in supporting yet another legal challenge to President Trump's unthinkable policy proposals," said Mayor Emanuel. "Chicago is a city built on the contributions of immigrants and refugees, and we will always welcome and stand up for those who seek a better life in our great city and this great country."

"We've seen the horror and indignation of millions of Americans as the Trump Administration wrests thousands of immigrant children from their parents," said Feuer. "I'm proud to stand with cities across our nation, yet again, in fighting back against this Administration's outrageous tactics and standing up for families."

"I have seen up-close, both at the border and here in New York City, how the President's 'zero tolerance' policies have ripped families apart and taken children thousands of miles

away from their parents. The President's latest effort would result in vulnerable immigrant children and families being locked up together under dangerous conditions," said New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio. "Instead of simply helping people fleeing violence and seeking asylum, the Trump Administration has repeatedly come up with new ways to hurt immigrants and refugees. New York City supports this amicus brief because we will always stand up to protect vulnerable children and families."

"After taking migrant children from their parents, the Trump Administration is now trying to legalize ad hoc detention sites, like tent cities on military bases," said San Francisco City Attorney Dennis Herrera. "That is not how America treats children. San Francisco is standing up with our partners in Los Angeles, Chicago and New York to say, 'Enough.' "

The cities' filing asserts that forced family separation was a creation of the federal government's own doing and not should serve as a basis for relieving the Trump administration from complying with the critical child welfare provisions in the *Flores* settlement. The only discernible purpose of the administration's court action is obtain the ability to house migrant children indefinitely while evading the crucial layer of oversight and accountability provided by the settlement's requirement to use state licensed childcare facilities.

The cities' opposition is all the more critical considering that Judge Dana M. Sabraw, in the United States District Court for the Southern District of California, has now issued an order requiring the federal government to reunite children with their parents as many, if not most, of those parents are being held in unlicensed federal detention centers.

State child welfare licensing is a necessary check on the adequacy and competence of the organizations running the facilities holding these children. The very purpose of state licensing is to ensure a minimum standard of quality in a service field that is incredibly complex with the potential to inflict extreme harm upon an already vulnerable youth population. The Department of Justice presented no evidence that state licensing is unavailable or even impracticable, nor did it propose any alternative to state licensure that would help ensure accountability of the agencies running the facilities.

To the contrary, a report released just this week by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) at the Department of Homeland Security shows that ICE, for example, should not be self-monitoring. Specifically, the OIG determined that ICE's privately-contracted inspection firms and its own self-monitoring via ICE's Office of Detention Oversight do not result in sustained compliance with detention standards and practices, nor do they promote systemic improvements or comprehensive corrections of deficiencies. Therefore, removing the licensing requirement at this critical moment of reunification could create serious consequences for the health and wellbeing of the children.

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